

# THEATERS and the PLAYS They Offer.



Miss ELSIE MACKAY  
in "DEBURAU"  
Belasco Theatre.



Miss ETHELIND TERRY  
in "HONEYDEW" Returning  
to The Casino



Miss MARIE GOFF  
in "NEMESIS"  
Hudson.



THE FAIRBANKS TWINS  
in "TWO LITTLE  
GIRLS IN BLUE"  
Cohan Theatre



Miss DOLLY CONNOLLY  
in "THE RIGHT GIRL" Times Square  
Theatre.

## WILLIAM HARRIS, JR.'S, PLANS FOR HIS PLAYS; THE FOREIGN DRAMA AND POPULAR FAVORITE

Manager Announces He Will Again Present "Abraham Lincoln" and "Mary Stuart"—Suggests He May Reproduce Other Familiar Dramas.

By LAWRENCE REAMER.

ALTHOUGH William Harris, Jr., does not use the evocative phrase "repertory theatre" in his latest declaration of intention, it must have taken some inventiveness to avoid it. John Drinkwater, evidently in a prophetic spirit, complained to his manager that many good plays were altogether lost here once their first run had come to an end. "Mary Stuart" is now somewhat prematurely among that number.

But it will be embalmed for future use in accordance with Mr. Harris's plan, and along with "Abraham Lincoln" and other dramas which the manager has in mind will be given to the public at intervals in the future. Lennox Robinson's play about Charles Parnell ought to deserve a place in the material of this interesting theatre. Mr. Harris quotes the example of Barry Jackson and Mr. Drinkwater at the Repertory Theatre in Birmingham as a precedent for his New York institution.

If such a theatre ever comes into existence in this city under the management of Mr. Harris or anybody else its fate will be interesting to observe. It has long been the conclusion of New York managers that a play, once its first popularity is exhausted, is as dead as mutton. Revivals have become all but unknown in the New York theatre.

Miss Doris Keane or Miss Laurette Taylor may occasionally play again the part in which her fame was made, but beyond such an exploitation of an admired personality the old play is useless in New York.

In this respect the audiences of the metropolis are not unlike those of other large cities. London has no repertory theatre. There a play exhausts its popularity and goes into the discard. Paris has its subventioned theatre in the Comedie Francaise, at which the classics are revived as well as old plays that may seem deserving of that honor. In the other theatres a play that pleases the public is kept almost unremittently on view so long as the managers will pay for the privilege of witnessing it. This is true to-day of the playhouses in Berlin, Vienna and Rome. The popular play is too difficult to acquire for any manager to imperil its value by taking it from the sight of any public eager to watch it.

New York audiences are especially impatient in the presence of any play that has been acted before. They may never have witnessed it. They may know nothing about it. Yet the mere fact that it has been played is sufficient to rob the public of all interest in it. There were few attempts at revivals even in the last years of the stock companies. They had already become impossible. It rarely happens that a manager is courageous enough nowadays to announce a revival.

Harris is the only person who has dared to suggest that he may in the future present again a number of plays already familiar.

### Could Do With Strindberg.

Just how close to the actual life of the theatre critical commentators on the drama may become is shown in a book of essays by a gifted lady writer. In it she deplores the departure of the drama from the standards of Ibsen and Strindberg, not out for instance, as some simonist Strindberg before the public. The writer cannot recall any play of Strindberg in a regular theatre here with the single exception of a two weeks' season organized by Oland Warner at the Berkeley Lyceum. The Theatre Guild gave two private performances of "The Dance of Death" for their subscribers last year which the public would have been fortunate to see. There have also been matinees of this author's plays at different times. Alla Nazimova even acted "Countess Julie" in Russian.

These plays have always been, so to speak, dramatic *hors d'oeuvre*. What would ever happen to the New York impresario who attempted a season of Strindberg? Ibsen, the most advertised playwright of the era, has brought

### Continental Play Again.

Has the successful career of the Theatre Guild turned the attention of managers once more to the continental drama? Archibald Selwyn even went to Europe to look the field over and came back with some treasures in his bag. Perhaps the old pre-war exodus will soon be seen again. Then the managers hurried away in May and returned in August with long lists of plays that were rarely if ever acted in full. Those they did produce were usually so little to the taste of the public that there was little or no profit in the venture. It seems nowadays incredible that the late Charles Frohman in one season produced six plays from the French with only a loss of time and money as the result of this enterprise.

Then the pendulum, in the managerial manner, swung in the opposite direction. There must be only American plays by native authors. An avalanche of them was dumped in a few seasons on the American stage. Crook plays, plays with surprise endings and surprises of all kinds, for that matter, except in any kind of merit; farces, bedroom pieces and nautical, white slave, rural and every other species of drama came to trial. They were not as a whole inferior to the foreign supply. Nor were they selected with any keener judgment.

The Theatre Guild here met with its prosperity merely because it offered the public plays of foreign origin. There are as many mechanical French farces, dull English comedies that could not arouse a smile outside of London and futile Hungarian dramas as there ever were. But the play readers of the Theatre Guild select their repertoire with good judgment. They do not try this play because it ran for six months in London or that one because the author is the most popular in Berlin. They seek quality in whatever they present, whether it had its origin here or there.

The managers who used to shovel in plays by the ton made their investments on the strength of foreign popularity, the vogue of the writer or the possibility of this or that star finding a role in the piece. Undoubtedly the plays which the Theatre Guild has given at the Garrick Theatre were at times accessible to the commercial managers. Probably they had the first chance at them. How regretful they must have been when the artistic performance of these plays at the Garrick Theatre made them notably successful! Half the failures of foreign plays in New York were attributable to the manner of their performance.

### The Native Play Favored.

Of course there is no denying the truth of the managerial doctrine that, other things being equal, the drama with the American theme, written by a native author, will be more successful than any other. But it must be more than merely American. Any work so splendidly native in every way as "Lightnin'" and "The First Year" are faultless specimens of their kind. Here are sympathetic and comprehensible subjects combined with the most skilful treatment. Such plays are certain to be more valuable to their producers than any work of foreign authorship that ever existed. But it is not only their Americanism that lifts them so far above the average.

The success of American managers has not been altogether confined to the Theatre Guild. Mr. Belasco has had a triumph with "Deburau," and will in the future again lavish his incomparable skill on a new drama by Sacha Guitry. Mr. Ames found more success than he has known in years

with "The Green Goddess." He cast and presented the piece admirably. Mr. Brady brought an almost exclusively English cast here to play "The Skin Game," which interested American audiences more than any of Galsworthy's previous dramas. Probably "Mary Rose" pleased fewer spectators than any of the Barrie dramas since "Little Mary." American audiences find it difficult to follow his whimsicality in the form it takes at present.

The success of "Spanish Love" seemed chiefly the result of its excellent Spanish dancing and the fine acting of James Rennie and William Powell. But the foreign play, it can be seen from the list that has recently gained popularity here, will be important in our theatre.

### The Popular Player.

When William Gillette acted at the Empire Theatre in the last important revival of "Diplomacy" seen here he was *Henry Beauchamp*. Of course the artistic result was exactly what could have been foretold. The part of an accomplished, cosmopolitan diplomat, a man of the world if ever one was put into a play, was converted by Mr. Gillette into a nasal, Down East village storekeeper. Such a curious failure to suggest even remotely the character drawn by Sardou inevitably aroused a chorus of critical protest. As a matter of fact Mr. Gillette's performance was grotesquely and weirdly bad. He might have been anything in the world but never *Henry Beauchamp*.

Did all the critical disapproval and the actor's own failure to suggest in the slightest degree the leading character of the play interfere with the popular success of the revival? Not in the slightest degree. The piece was given for weeks to large audiences at the Empire Theatre. It was equally successful in other cities.

Mr. Gillette is a most popular actor. Nobody cared whether he happened to appear to advantage or not in this particular part. The public wanted to see him, want in large numbers and enjoyed it immensely. So, as a matter of fact, he is not always found in such Bohemian surroundings, there you are. Sometimes it seems as if the popular favorite could do no wrong. It was certainly impossible for Mr. Gillette to alienate his admirers even in this role.

Miss Barrymore and her brother John are great favorites now. Miss Barrymore, who had always been much admired, suddenly blazed out as a pet of the theatre with her sensational success in "Declassee." John gained immensely in popularity through his association with Arthur Hopkins. Now the two are able to fill the Empire Theatre at double the regular prices in a play so amateurish and inefficient as to make in its way a record. Yet crowds storm the box office of the theatre to be admitted at double the usual rates. Is it not true that the public favorite can do no wrong?



Miss LAURA WALKER in  
"THE GHOST BETWEEN"  
39th St. Theatre.



Miss EMILY EARLE  
in "PEEK-A-BOO"  
Columbia.

## "The Three Musketeers" and New "Peek-a-Boo" Come In

MONDAY.

CASINO THEATRE—Efrem Zimbalist's musical comedy, "Honeydew," will be presented by Joe Weber for a return engagement at this playhouse, after having appeared on Broadway for twenty-six weeks earlier in the season. The cast remains the same and includes Hal Forde, Sam Ash, Theresa Maxwell Conover, Dorothy Follis and Ethelind Terry.

MANHATTAN OPERA HOUSE—"The Three Musketeers," a musical play in two acts, written and composed by Richard W. Temple, which was postponed from last week, will be presented. The story is taken from Alexandre Dumas's historical romance.

COLUMBIA THEATRE—The regular summer attraction will start its six weeks' run in Jean Bodin's "All-New Peek-a-Boo." The latest production has an original score, book and scenery, with many players new to New York. Bobby Clark and Paul McCullough, leading comedians, will return, as will the Seven Musical Spillers. Others among the sixty in the company are the White Way Trio, the Frank Sabini Trio, Jack Edwards, Charles Mack, Earle and Earle, Emily Earle and Ruth Wheeler.

## Hampden's Shakespeare Bills for Last Two Weeks

The schedule of plays for the last two weeks at the Broadhurst Theatre of Walter Hampden's annual New York season in Shakespeare is as follows: Tuesday, "Hamlet"; Wednesday, "Macbeth"; Thursday matinee, "Merchant of Venice"; Thursday night, "Taming of the Shrew"; Friday, "Servant in the House"; Saturday matinee, "Hamlet"; Saturday night, "Merchant of Venice"; Sunday for the week of May 23: Monday, "Taming of the Shrew"; Tuesday, "Hamlet"; Wednesday, "Merchant of Venice"; Thursday matinee, "Taming of the Shrew"; Thursday night, "Macbeth"; Friday, "Servant in the House"; Saturday matinee, "Merchant of Venice"; Saturday night, "Merchant of Venice"; Sunday, "Merchant of Venice." The bill for the concluding evening of the engagement on Saturday, May 28, will be in the nature of a surprise and will be announced later.

## Comedian's Father Leaves \$175,000 to Him

Although William Kent has achieved what most persons would consider success in musical comedy, his father, the late William H. Kent, never quite forgave him for following a theatrical career.

The comedian, who is a feature of the opening bill at the New Brighton Theatre, has received word from St. Paul that the elder Kent, who died in that city on March 5, left his entire estate (approximating \$175,000) to his actor son. The will, however, contains a clause stipulating that not one cent of the money be invested in any sort of theatrical enterprise.

The parent had selected a commercial career for his only boy, but the lure of the stage proved too great for young William, and unknown to his family he made his professional debut as a page boy supporting Chauncey Olcott.

## News and Gossip of the Stage, Its Plays, Players and Managers

Consider the Case of the Thrifty Chorus Men Who Served as Jurymen and Caused Light Opera's Postponement—"The Beggars Opera" Failure Here, Success Elsewhere.

BACK of the postponement of the Southern Light Opera Company's production of "The Three Musketeers," musical version of Alexandre Dumas's romance, at the Manhattan Opera House, is an interesting story of ambition which meant profits to the men whom it filled, but a costly outlay for others. The opening performance had to be deferred from last Thursday evening until tomorrow night because two chorus men zealously insisted on picking up about \$60 on the side, while the postponement meant a loss to the opera company that was put by an official between \$1,500 and \$2,000.

The two ambitious men were leaders of the chorus. They had been specially picked from among 100 applicants by agencies all over the city. Not only was care used in selecting the ordinary chorus men, but they had to present a stalwart appearance befitting musketeers, which few male members of the merry-merry do, but extra consideration was bestowed on the leaders, for, in addition to being strapping figures, they had to be able to fence and sing small parts.

The two men who qualified were called to jury duty and began drawing \$3 a day extra two weeks ago. They were able to serve the State and the opera company, too, because rehearsals were at night. Then, as the premiere neared, the management called day rehearsals—and found that the leaders were serving among twelve good men and true.

The management was in a quandary. The two men had been carefully trained and it would be impossible to replace their 300 pound personalities at such short notice. On the other hand, it would be impossible to give the performance properly without them. The court case on which they were deliberating was due to go to the jury last Friday, but it was deemed advisable not to open on Saturday. Monday was fixed as the opening date, and in the meantime the company, having leased the Manhattan for several weeks, had to go on paying rent without any return coming in.

The English company, specially imported here for the revival of "The Beggars Opera," left Montreal last week to return to England, after having had one of the most curious experiences to befall a company. The musical failure in New York, they were reorganized and taken over by the Bohemians, Inc., and became one of the few successes visible this season on the road. At Chicago they played a return engagement after the lapse of a few weeks at the request of a round robin signed by leading Chicago citizens, including the mayor, and in Canada they made a similar hit.

Success doesn't necessarily mean money in the theatrical business. The financial profit frequently depends on the overhead. A striking instance of that came to light in "Spanish Love," which has just closed. The production played through the season to an average between \$3,000 and \$5,000 a week, which is considered a good return for a dramatic attraction. Yet Wagenthal and Kemper are reported to have lost \$17,000 on the production, because of the heavy initial outlay and the expensive cast. The piece will be sent on tour next season, when no doubt the managers will more than recoup themselves on it.

Managers are constantly engaged in luring players from one another with the bait of increased salaries—except in the case of actors who have long term contracts—but there appears to be no hard feeling over this practice, since all indulge in it. The other day a manager happened in to see "Ladies Night" and Martin Herman, brother of A. H. Woods, spotted him. Herman went up to him with a grin and said: "Here's a programme which player do you want to steal?"

An unusual case of cooperation between the Actors' Equity Association and a manager has just cropped up. Gerald Bacon, realizing he had too heavy a burden in the salaries paid to players in "Princess Virtue" after the musical comedy opened at the Central Theatre, told them salaries would be

cut. The players, through an Equity representative, declared they would quit if their pay were decreased.

Bacon, wishing to arrive at an equitable settlement, showed them that the large salaries couldn't possibly be maintained by the receipts, and asked them what they preferred to do instead of being without a job at a time when the theatrical business is particularly slack. The players replied that they would continue to play on a sharing basis, taking a percentage of the receipts. This arrangement suited the producer, and on that agreement the musical play continued.

The Shuberts are building another of their theatres on West Forty-ninth street. It is being erected alongside St. Malachy's Roman Catholic Church, west of Broadway. It is planned to be of medium size, seating about 1,000, and will probably be on the style of the Ritz.

Another race is one similar to that which occurred between William A. Brady and A. H. Woods at the start of the present season over the production respectively of "Opportunity" and "Crossed Gamblers." Both these plays had Wall street themes, and the managers engaged in a lively scramble to see who would get to the public first with his offering.

Brady, who seems more than any other manager to have events break for him so that he is concerned in such competitions, this time has for his rival L. Lawrence Weber. Brady has already started on the way to production a new play by Col. Jasper Ewing Brady and Philip Bartholomae called "Personality." Weber has just accepted a drama by William Le Baron entitled "Nobody's Money," which is cast along the same lines. Now the public can sit back and watch the race between the producers to determine who will first enthrall them with his offering.

A vaudeville star who recently appeared at a local house and cut quite a swath with her act created almost as big an impression with the banks of flowers that were carried down to the footlights for her by the perspiring ushers. The multi-colored evidence that she had so many well-wishers drew an extra round of applause from the audience.

Subsequently it developed that she had ordered the flowers herself. This caused no particular surprise, for cases of this kind have been known in the past. But comment was aroused when the performer declined to pay the enormous bill presented by the florist. Popularity came too high at the price.

Later she appeared at a vaudeville theatre, and the display of flowers was repeated, but this time vaudeville was freely made among those in the know that they weren't furnished by the same florist.

Others who carry the house flowers down to vaudeville headlines must grow frightfully cynical.

## Miss Barrymore in "Carrots" for Drew Post

The theatrical unit of the American Legion, the S. Rankin Drew Post, will have its annual theatrical performance at the New York Hippodrome this evening.

The post, named in memory of the first actor killed in the war, Sidney Rankin Drew, son of the comedian, includes among its members the men of the allied amusements who were in active service. It maintains quarters, looks after the employment of men in its line of profession and takes care of the wounded.

One of the features of the bill will be the appearance of Miss Ethel Barrymore in her famous role in "Carrots," supported by Bruce Morton. Others announced are D. W. Griffith, Frank Bacon, Miss Dorothy Jordan, Miss Dorothy Gish, James Rennie, Tom Lewis, Miss Mary Hay, Miss Marion Davies, Six Brown Brothers, Montague Love, Gus Edwards and company, the "Dumbbells" company, Helene Grenelle, Maurice Summers, Arthur Rankin, Johnny Hines, Gordon Standing, Gilbert Thomas, George Lynch, Roy Lloyd and Eugene O'Brien.

The sketch, "A Bit of Eighteen," which was played with great success on the other side, will be presented by a cast made up entirely of men of the post who served overseas.

The master of ceremonies will be Raymond Hitchcock. R. H. Burnside, general stage director of the Hippodrome, will have charge of the stage.

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